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AUTHOR Stacks, Don W.; Burgoon, Judee K.
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ABSTRACT

A model of conversational distance violations that claims that these violations mediate communication outcomes such as source credibility, source attraction, and learning was examined in a study involving 136 undergraduate students. The students were tested in small group settings using eight confederates, four rated highly and four lowly in attraction and in credibility as measured in the dimensions of competence, composure, character, extroversion, and sociability. Contrary to the findings in all previous research that tested the model, a consistent main effect for reward was not found. There was a trend toward attraction, especially social attraction, being higher in the rewarding than the nonrewarding condition; however, similar results did not occur for persuasion and credibility. (DF)

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THE PERSUASIVE EFFECTS OF VIOLATING SPATIAL DISTANCE EXPECTATIONS IN SMALL GROUPS

Don W. Stacks
University of South Alabama

and

Judee K. Burgoon
Michigan State University

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THE PERSUASIVE EFFECTS OF VIOLATING SPATIAL DISTANCE EXPECTATIONS IN SMALL GROUPS

In a recent review and commentary, Stacks and Burgoon (1979) modify a model of violations of interpersonal distancing expectations proposed by Burgoon (Burgoon & Jones, 1976; Burgoon, 1978) and expand it to include persuasive communications. Previous research has been partially supportive of the Burgoon model's predicted effect that violations of interpersonal distancing expectations mediate communication outcomes such as source credibility, source attraction and learning (Burgoon, 1978; Burgoon, Stacks & Woodall, 1977, 1979). Stacks and Burgoon argue that source credibility and attraction are directly related to the persuasion process, especially in interpersonal interactions where persuasive outcomes are of interest. As such, they posit that violations of interpersonal distancing expectations distract the receiver from counterarguing a persuasive message by focusing attention to source characteristics. The purpose of this paper is to provide an initial test of the expanded model.

Interaction Distance and Distraction

Festinger and Maccoby (1964) first reported that persuasion was enhanced by distracting receivers of counterattitudinal messages through the simultaneous presentation of disruptive stimuli. They suggested that distraction interfered with counterarguing, a subvocal (psychological) process whereby the receiver is prevented from subvocally counterarguing against the message. Based on the assumption that people, when presented counterattitudinal messages, screen and counterargue information and arguments advanced by a persuader, Stacks and Burgoon posit that the distance a persuader maintains or deviates from in the interaction will either facilitate or inhibit the receiver's motivation to counterargue.

Stacks and Burgoon (1979) suggest that this effect takes place due to either anxiety from extreme spatial invasion or from attributions concerning reward and the degree of perceived personal involvement at other distances. Burgoon and Jones (1976) posited that the effects of violating interpersonal distancing expectations are a function of three factors: (1) the reward valence of the initiator of the deviation, (2) the degree of deviation from the expected distance, and (3) the directionality of the deviation (closer or farther than expected). The predicted effects were such that rewarding initiators should produce the best outcomes with deviations increasingly closer, but not so close to constitute an invasion of the reactant's "threat threshold." Nonrewarding initiators, on the other hand, were predicted to obtain the best outcomes by maintaining the expected distance, with deviations producing increasingly negative outcomes. Rewarding initiators were also predicted to yield more positive outcomes generally than punishing or nonrewarding initiators.

Tests of the model (Burgoon, 1978; Burgoon, Stacks & Woodall, 1977, 1979) proved to be partially supportive. Rewarding initiators generally produced more positive outcomes than nonrewarding initiators and nonrewarding initiators produced optimum results by maintaining the expected distance and not deviating. Rewarding initiators, however, produced better outcomes by deviating either closer or farther than the expected distance. Stacks and Burgoon suggest that the rewarding initiator's deviations farther than the norm indicate status (e.g., Willis, 1965) and possibly a reinforcement of the source attractiveness. As such, it would be expected that the farther deviation might produce better communication outcomes.

The distraction literature has established that the nature of the distractor appears to mediate results obtained in the distraction paradigm (e.g.,

Miller & Baron, 1973). Miller and Baron (1973) found, for example, that when subjects were distracted by a highly credible source distraction enhanced attitude change, but when distracted by a noncredible source, distraction had no effect on attitude change. In this same line, Kielser and Mathog (1968) suggest that when exposed to a "barely" credible source, the individual does not need to counterargue, that he/she can rely on source derogation alone to resist the persuasive attempt.

Stacks and Burgoon suggest that violations of interpersonal distancing expectations serve to distract the receiver of a persuasive message by focusing attention first on the message source, producing critical evaluations and a decision to pay attention to the message. This effect, however, is mediated by the source's reward valence. In the case of a rewarding initiator, the distraction should be less salient, focusing attention to the message. For the nonrewarding source, however, the distraction should be the focus of attention. In terms of attitude change, the rewarding source's deviations should facilitate persuasion while the nonrewarding source's deviations should inhibit attitude change as the focus attention in the former is on the message and the latter on the distractor (e.g., Zimbardo et al, 1970, Baron, Baron & Miller, 1973).

In accord with Burgoon (1978) and Burgoon, Stacks and Woodall's (1977, 1979) suggestion that the initial model be modified in the case of the rewarding initiator, any deviation, up to the point of the threat threshold, should produce better communication outcomes for that source. A deviation closer than the norm should indicate attraction and increased liking toward the subject. Since people are more susceptible to persuasive from sources they perceive as liking them (Mills, 1966; Rosnow & Robinson, 1967), their motivation to counterargue

should be disrupted and greater yielding to the message should occur. Since violations of interpersonal distancing expectations have been documented to produce higher credibility and attraction ratings on at least some dimensions (Burgoon, 1978; Burgoon, Stacks & Woodall, 1977), and subjects distracted while listening to high credibility sources are more susceptible to the message (e.g., Cook, 1969; Miller & Baron, 1973), it follows that distance violations which enhance credibility and attraction should also produce more persuasion and less counterarguing. The deviation farther than the expected distance should connote increased status and attraction for the rewarding initiator. Since the rewarding initiator has already provided a positive reward value for the interaction, the attributions of increased status and attractiveness should inhibit the receiver from counterarguing the message.

For the nonrewarding initiator, any deviation from the expected distance should produce less positive communication outcomes. This effect is due primarily to threat implications and negative reward value for the interaction. The negative characterisitics of the nonrewarding source may also be perceived as characteristics of a poor communicator. As such, the distraction may inhibit counterarguing, but the receiver need only to rely on source derogation to resist the message.

In terms of the expanded model, two curvilinear relationships should be obtained between distance and reward. For the rewarding initiator of a deviation, any deviation from the expected distance, except beyond the threat threshold, should produce higher ratings of credibility and attraction and more yielding to the message should occur. This effect is due to the distance distraction focusing attention on the message while the reward power of the source disrupts the counterarguing process. For the nonrewarding initiator, any deviation from the expected distance should produce lower credibility and attraction ratings

and less yielding to the message due to the distance distraction focusing attention on the negative characteristics of the source.

Initial Test of the Model

While the initial model tested the effects of violating interpersonal distancing expectations in dyadic interactions, an interesting question is how effective the model would be in a small group context where the behavior of one person is counterbalanced by the behavior of another. In an effort to answer this question and test the expanded model, the experiment was conducted in three person groups where two individuals tried to persuade a third, neutral party.

From the Stacks and Burgoon (1979) rationale, five hypotheses were tested. The first, based on research which suggests that reward reinforces source attractiveness and credibility (e.g., Burgoon, 1978; Burgoon, Stacks & Woodall, 1977, 1979) and affects persuasion (e.g., Mills, 1966, Rosnow & Robinson, 1967), predicted that rewarding sources would produce better communication outcomes than nonrewarding sources:

H_1: Subjects who interact with an initiator who is rewarding will perceive that initiator as more credible, attractive and persuasive than subjects who interact with an initiator who is nonrewarding.

The second hypothesis predicted that deviations from the expected distance distract receivers from focusing on the message:

H_2: Any deviation from the expected distance by one group member increased distraction from messages presented by all group members.

The third hypothesis predicted the nature of the reward by distance interaction. From the preceding rationale, it was predicted that rewarding initiators would obtain higher attraction and credibility ratings and be more persuasive by

maintaining the expected distance:

H_3: When deviations are committee by a rewarding person, greater perceptions of credibility, attraction and more yielding to the message will occur than when that person conforms to the norm, when deviations are committed by a nonrewarding person, deviations produce less persuasion and decreased perceptions of credibility and attraction.

Because the group situation allows a unique test of the model such that each confederate could be compared to another confederate in the same interaction or compared against themselves (as their own control), two additional hypotheses were tested. It was thought that the logic of the initial model should be extended to this situation where the effects of deviating versus stationary confederates could be tested:

H_4: Between two rewarding group members, the one who violates the expected distance will be perceived as more credible attractive and persuasive with a third group member than the one who conforms.

H_5: Between two nonrewarding group members, the one who violates the expected distance will be perceived as less credible, attractive and persuasive with a third group member than the one who conforms.

Experimental Subjects and Methods

Subjects for the experiment were 136 undergraduates from introductory communication courses. Ninety of the subjects were from a small southeastern university and 46 from a large midwestern university. Participation was voluntary in some cases, in lieu of regular class assignment or for extra credit in others.

Eight volunteers served as confederates. Two males and two females from each university were trained and memorized arguments for one of two sides of a court case where the defendant was being tried for second degree murder.

The reward value of the confederates was manipulated in several ways. First,

as physical attraction, confederates were either "dressed up" (dresses or nice pants and blouses for the females, slacks and shirts for the males) or "dressed down" (jeans, t-shirts). In the reward conditions the confederates introduced themselves as Seniors with more prestigeous majors (e.g., pre-law, political science), from upper division communication courses and an expressed interest in the task while engaging in forward leaning behavior. In the nonrewarding conditions the confederates were introduced themselves as Freshmen majoring in either elementary education or English, but unsure of their majors. They claimed to come from introductory courses and expressed little interest in the task while maintaining rigid postures.

Following training of the confederates, subjects were asked to report to a room to participate in a decision-making study of various sized groups. Subjects received a brief synopsis of the court case and instructions which led them to believe that other subjects were currently in other rooms studying court transcripts and preparing arguments. Each subject was informed that he/she would be interacting in a three-person group as a neutral third party. In each of the experimental rooms a table was set up along one wall with "transcripts" of the case for study. Additionally, three chairs were set up in the room, two facing one, each 36 inches apart (pretested as being the average distance for such discussions).

Once in the experimental rooms, subjects and confederates were seated in the chairs and informed that they would have 10 minutes to discuss the case and come to a decision. Subjects were then given a subject and group number and told that they need not discuss their decision at the end of the discussion. Each group was also told that the discussion would be tape recorded so that the experimenters could analyze the procedures. The subjects interacted with either

two male or two female confederates of equal reward value. In each interaction one of the confederates remained stationary while the other adopted one of three distance conditions. In the normative distance condition the confederate maintained his/her preselected distance. In the close and far distance conditions the confederate moved his/her chair 18 inches closer to or farther from the subject during his/her initial argument. The confederates alternated engaging in the distance manipulations with one deviating in one experimental condition and remaining stationary in the next. Within the experimental design, all rooms were counterbalanced.

Following the session, subjects were asked to report to another room to evaluate the interaction The confederates were asked to remain in the room and to go back over the transcripts of the case and prepare arguments for the side opposite that which they had just argued. Subjects first evaluated the arguments of each confederate and the distraction caused by the distance manipulations via a series of Likert-like scales which measured each confederate's persuasibility, subjects confidence in their decision and the amount of distraction in the interaction. They then rated each confederate on credibility and attraction. Credibility was measured by a series of semantic differential scales recommended by McCroskey, Jensen and Valencia (1973) which measure peer credibility. Altogether, five dimensions were tapped: competence, composure, character, extroversion and sociability. Attraction was measured by a series of Likert-like statements that reflect physical, social and task attraction (McCroskey & McCain, 1974). Separate dimension scores were used for all dependent measures.

All subjects were debriefed.

Results

Blocking Variables

It was anticipated that several variables other than those directly under

test might influence the results. Specifically of concern were any differences between the two university samples, the male and female confederates, the defense and prosecution arguments, and among the eight confederates. To determine whether these potential sources of variation were significant, four multivariate analyses of variance were conducted, each with all the hypothesized dependent variables included as a total set in the analyses.

The first analysis, with the eight confederates as the levels of the independent variable, produced a significant Wilks' lambda ($F=1.45$, $df=84,725$, $p< .01$) and accounted for 61% of the variance in the dependent variables treated as a set. This indicated that there were strong individual differences operating that would have to be controlled for and might override any experimental effects. Significant univariate F-ratios obtained for the dependent variables of physical attraction ($F=5.73$, $p< .001$), social attraction ($F=2.09$, $p <.05$), task attraction ($F=2.11$, $p <.05$) and extroversion ($F=2.45$, $p <.02$).

The second analysis, which treated the two levels of confederate gender as the independent variable, similarly produced a significant Wilks' lambda ($F=2.54$, $df=12,123$, $p <.005$) and accounted for 20% of the variance. Significant univariate F-ratios obtained for the dependent variables of physical attraction ($F=18.98$, $p< .001$) and social attraction ($F=5.05$, $p <.03$). These results indicated that male and female confederates were differentially perceived by subjects, especially in the area of attraction. Females were rated as more attractive.

The third analysis examined the defense versus prosecution arguments when presented by the non-stationary confederate. The overall Wilks' lambda was not significant ($F=1.39$, $df=11,124$, $p> .10$). One significant univariate F-ratio obtained for competence ($F=6.49$, $p<.05$).

The fourth analysis compared the two schools from which the samples came. Again, a significant Wilks' lambda resulted ($F=1.99$, $df=11,124$, $p <.04$), account-

ing for 15% of the variance. However, the only significant univariate F-ratio to result was for the dependent variable of extroversion ($F=4.45$, $p<.04$).

Because the school, sex and message-side effects were confounded with the individual confederate differences, and because the two strongest effects occurred with the sex and confederate variables, it was decided that subsequent experimental analyses would be blocked on the eight levels of confederate and the two levels of confederate gender, with confederates nested within gender. It was hoped that these two blocking variables would also control for the marginal school and message-side differences.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1, that there would be a main effect for reward on persuasion, attraction and credibility, was tested through three multivariate analyses of variance. The dependent variables in the first analysis were: 1) the degree to which the subject opted for a verdict favorable to the non-stationary (deviating) confederate's position, 2) the persuasiveness of the non-stationary confederate and 3) the subject's confidence in his/her choice of verdict, all three of which were expected to increase with the confederate's persuasive success. The second analysis included the five dimensions of credibility as the dependent variables. Although the dimensions originated from orthogonal factor analysis and are presumed to be independent, previous research in which the variables have been used in raw score form (as opposed to factor score form) has found nontrivial correlations among the variables. Hence, it was deemed advisable to treat the variables as a set and take into account any intercorrelations. Using the same rationale, the three factors of attraction were treated as a set in the third analysis. The three sets of dependent variables were analyzed separately because of the number of variables involved and the complexity of the analysis. The independent variables were: 1) confederates, 2) confederate gender, 3) distance and 4) reward.

Results from the three analyses failed to adequately support the hypothesis. In the attraction analysis, there was a trend toward a significant Wilks' lambda ($F=2.57$, $df=3,120$, $p<.06$), accounting for 7% of the variance, and a significant univariate effect for social attraction ($F=5.61$, $p<.02$). However, the credibility and persuasion analyses failed to yield either significant multivariate or univariate effects. This lack of support, which was highly inconsistent with previous investigations, in which the reward manipulation had produced significant and powerful effects, meant that the hypothesized differences in distance effects between the two reward conditions were unlikely to appear.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis, that any deviations from the expected distance by one group member increase distraction from the messages of all group members was tested by a 2(confederate gender) x 4(confederates within gender) x 3(distance) analysis of variance on the distraction measure. The analysis failed to yield a significant main effect for distance ($F<1.0$); consequently, the planned cell comparisons between the distraction and nondistraction conditions were not undertaken.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis predicted an interaction between distance and reward such that a rewarding group member is more persuasive, attractive and credible when violating distance expectations than when conforming to them, while a non-rewarding member is more persuasive, attractive and credible when conforming to than violating distancing expectations. It was tested through the same three multivariate analyses of variance as hypothesis one.

The results provided partial support for the hypothesis, but in the reward condition only. A significant main effect for distance occurred in the multi-

variate analysis (Wilks' lambda=.845, F=2.53, df=6,174, $p < .03$) for the persuasion variables. When separate analyses were conducted for the reward versus the nonreward condition, they revealed that the significant effect was confined to the reward condition (lambda=.788, F=2.31, df=6,110, $p < .04$, $R^2 = .21$). A trend toward univariate significance obtained for favorability of the verdict in the reward condition (F=3.01, $p < .06$) and the Roy-Bargman stepdown tests revealed that persuasiveness of the confederate made a significant contribution to the overall model beyond the effects of favorability of the verdict (F=3.83, $p < .03$). The means, reported in Table 1, conformed to the predicted curvilinear relationship for favorability of verdict and confederate persuasiveness and planned comparisons between the deviant distance conditions and the normative distance condition produced significant t-values (t=1.78 and t=19.23 respectively), confirming that the results fit the predicted model. Only the variable of confidence failed to conform.

TABLE 1.
MEANS FOR CREDIBILITY AND PERSUASION IN REWARDING AND NONREWARDING CONDITIONS.

Variable	Reward Condition			Nonreward Condition		
	Far	Norm	Close	Far	Norm	Close
Favorability of Verdict	6.43	5.33	5.09	6.17	5.96	6.18
Persuasiveness of Confederate	10.09	9.50	10.71	10.39	10.12	11.00
Confidence in Verdict Chosen	7.57	7.39	7.43	8.00	7.29	6.96
Competence	17.38	16.55	17.38	16.74	17.33	16.82
Character	16.09	16.33	15.67	16.04	15.96	16.28
Sociability	17.76	16.89	17.71	17.17	16.54	17.68
Composure	15.67	16.83	14.48	15.61	15.62	15.93
Extroversion	16.24	16.72	17.19	16.39	15.75	17.14

In the credibility analyses, a trend toward a significant main effect resulted in the multivariate analysis (Wilks' lambda=.873, F=1.65, df=10,236, $p < .10$) which was again confined to the reward condition (lambda=.749, F=1.65, df=10,106, p=.10, R^2=.25). The means (in Table 1) and planned comparisons produced significant results for the variables of competence, and sociability (t=2.00 and t=3.57 respectively). The remaining three dimensions produced nonsignificant results or means that failed to conform to the predicted pattern.

In the attraction analyses, the multivariate effect for distance was not significant ($F < 1.0$); consequently, no planned comparisons were completed.

Beyond the effects for distance, the three analyses yielded the following significant effects for the blocking variables: 1) a significant univariate effect for confederate sex on subject's confidence in the verdict selected, 2) a significant multivariate effect for confederates on the credibility variables, 3) a significant multivariate effect for confederates on the attraction variables and 4) a significant univariate effect for confederate sex on physical attraction.

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis, that between two rewarding group members, the one who deviates from the expected distance is more persuasive, attractive and credible than the one who conforms to distancing expectations, was tested through a one-way multivariate analysis of variance. The nine dependent variables were the difference between the deviating and stationary confederates on persuasiveness, credibility (all five dimensions) and attraction (all three dimensions). The independent variable was the three levels of distance within the reward condition. Because of the reduced number of dependent and independent variables, all dependent variables were included in one analysis.

Results strongly confirmed the hypothesis: there was a significant multivariate effect for distance (Wilks' lambda=.53, F=2.03, df=18.98, $p < .02$),

accounting for 47% of the variance. Planned comparisons between the deviant and norm distance conditions yielded significant t-values and means conforming to the predicted curves for the dependent variables of persuasiveness, physical attraction, competence and sociability. Additionally, the means for task attraction and extroversion were somewhat conforming but failed to achieve significance. The means are reported in Table 2.

TABLE 2.
MEANS FOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STATIONARY AND DEVIATING CONFEDERATES IN REWARDING AND NONREWARDING CONDITIONS ON PERSUASIVENESS, CREDIBILITY AND ATTRACTION

Variable	Reward Condition			Nonreward Condition		
	Far	Norm	Close	Far	Norm	Close
Persuasiveness	.00	-1.83	-.42	-.04	.50	.82
Physical Attraction	.90	-.44	.52	.22	.25	.89
Social Attraction	.67	-.27	-.62	.35	-.12	.14
Task Attraction	.47	-1.22	-.95	.35	.12	.32
Competence	-.05	-1.00	-.19	-.26	.67	-.28
Character	.43	.78	-1.24	.26	-.25	-.71
Sociability	.48	-.44	.57	-.26	-.62	.11
Composure	1.33	1.00	-1.86	.43	.29	-.28
Extroversion	-.05	-.06	1.52	-.00	.04	1.71

Hypothesis 5

The last hypothesis, that between two nonrewarding group members, the more persuasive, attractive and credible one would be the one who conformed to rather than deviated from distancing expectations, was tested in the same manner as hypothesis 4. The results failed to support the hypothesis: the multivariate and univariate F-ratios all failed to achieve significance. The means appear in Table 2 as a basis of comparison with those for hypothesis 4.

DISCUSSION

The dual purposes of this investigation were to provide a test of the Burgoon (Burgoon and Jones, 1976; Burgoon, 1978; Stacks and Burgoon, 1979) model of conversational distance violations and to determine the relevance of the model to persuasive discourse in a group context. The results are equivocal in regard to both purposes.

Contrary to the finding in all prior research that tested the model, a consistent main effect for reward did not materialize. There was a trend toward attraction, and especially social attraction (which was significant by itself), being higher in the rewarding than the nonrewarding condition. However, similar results did not occur for persuasion and credibility. At least a couple of explanations are possible. One is that the confederates were not successful in creating a truly nonrewarding situation. The problem appeared not to be in the rewarding condition, since significant results were obtained for distance within that condition. The appearance factors in the low reward condition should have provided a strong contrast with those in the high reward condition, but it is possible that the students did not see the unattractive appearance (which included more casual clothing and poorer grooming) as unusual or different from the average clothing of other college students. Moreover, the lower status introduction in the low reward condition may have heightened homophily with the typical subject, thereby weakening the status difference between the high and low reward conditions. Finally, confederates may have been unable to sustain the impression of low interest in the task in the nonrewarding condition. Confederates did in fact report difficulty in appearing disinterested at the same time they were presenting well-reasoned arguments and engaging heavily in the debate.

Beyond possible problems with the reward manipulation itself, it is possible that the presence of a second confederate presenting the same reward cues neutralized their effectiveness for the deviating confederate. If, for example, both confederates created the impression of the low status, uncertain Freshman, then their behavior combined might have been perceived as average and typical, thereby weakening the noticeability of the negative cues. Conversely, the rewarding cues in the high reward condition might have seemed less remarkable in the deviating confederate since they were equally present in the other one. If this explanation has any validity, it has important implications for assessing the effects of nonverbal behavior within small groups. It means that the behavior of one member cannot be judged in isolation from the behavior of others but must instead be compared and contrasted to the behavior of other members before its effects can be understood.

Whatever the correct explanation for the lack of consistent reward effects, it meant that the predicted distance effects could not be fairly tested since they were predicated on two clearly different types of members, one very rewarding and one not at all rewarding. The results for hypotheses three, four and five revealed that the rewarding condition did create the optimal conditions for distancing violations, but the nonrewarding condition was insufficiently negative to allow distance to have any differential impact. In the reward condition, confederates who deviated from the expected or normative distance persuaded the third group member to choose a verdict more favorable to their position, were rated as more persuasive and were perceived as more credible, especially in the areas of competence and sociability. They were not, however, seen as more attractive when they deviated. The greater persuasiveness and credibility in the violation conditions is strongly supportive of the hypothesized model. It represents a somewhat counterintuitive finding, that more may be

gained through deviant than conformant behavior so long as the individual engaging in the deviant behavior is perceived as rewarding.

Parallel to the finding that a given group member may improve his or her own effectiveness by violating the distance expectations, the results for hypothesis four reveal that a person may also enhance his/her effectiveness relative to other group members. This seems to have important implications for small group communication. One's effectiveness is indeed influenced by the behaviors of others, and comparatively speaking, it is more effective to be rewarding and deviate than to be rewarding and conform. Thus, the person who finds him/herself in the midst of an attractive group may gain the persuasive edge over otherwise equally effective members by engaging in a subtle distance deviation. Whether other types of nonverbal deviations would have similarly beneficent effects is a question worth investigating.

The failure to find significant distraction effects in the distance deviation conditions raises some question about the logic underlying the model of distancing violations. It had been argued that the adoption of deviant distances would serve to distract the subject and that this distraction would, in the rewarding condition, increase the subject's vulnerability to persuasion, and in the nonrewarding condition, increase source derogation and resistance to persuasion. It is of course possible that the distance violations were distracting but that the subjects were not cognizant of them. In fact, much prior research has recognized the difficulty of measuring distraction through self-report and has frequently found distraction effects without corresponding subject awareness of the effects. Thus, it would be premature to conclude that just because subjects did not report increased distraction in the deviation conditions, that distraction was not operative. An alternative explanation, however, is that distance violations serve an arousal rather than a distraction function. That arousal heightens attention to the message, which, when presented by a reward-

ing individual, is accepted by virtue of their credibility and reinforcement value, and which, when presented by a nonrewarding individual, heightens counterargument and source derogation. These alternative explanations need further experimental scrutiny before sound conclusions can be drawn about the underlying mechanisms that explain the impact of distance violations.

One last finding that deserves comment is the significant individual differences between confederates in their effects on other group members. While distance variations accounted for up to 47% of the variance in some analyses, indicating a powerful effect, the effects for confederate differences were even more pronounced. In the analysis with confederates as the only independent variable, 61% of the variance in the dependent variables was accounted for. Obviously, there are important individual differences operating that affect persuasiveness, credibility and attraction, despite attempts to control such factors. It is therefore advisable that future research of this nature make efforts to measure any such factors that cannot be experimentally controlled and to include the measured variables in the analyses as covariates.

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